

Transcript

Meade County Cooperative Agreement with Northern Hills District

September 11, 2012

Event: Meade County Cooperative Agreement

Rhonda O'Byrne, Northern Hills District Ranger

The Northern Hills Ranger District has recently signed a cooperative agreement with Meade County to have Meade County do some cut and chunk work out on the National Forest system land on the district that are within Meade County. I think we've got a real opportunity with Meade County. In Lawrence County we really have seen the bugs take off. We've got large pockets over vast amounts of the forest within Lawrence County. In Meade County it's just really starting to kind of go in there. We're seeing a lot more smaller pockets. I think it's a lot more manageable, and hopefully we can catch some of these and reduce the number of bugs in these smaller pockets so we don't get those big outbreaks. So much of our focus right now, are within those timber sales we have already started laying out and working with, and predominantly those around Lawrence County. While we have completed our analysis for in the future, to do timber sales on that part of the National forest in Meade County, it's probably several years out before we'll actually be able to offer those sales, so having Meade County go out in front of these, and and sanitize and try to reduce those bug levels, prior to us being able to get there with any kind of big commercial projects I think it's really gonna be helpful in slowing down the spread of those bugs.

Alan Aker, Meade County Commissioner and Logger

We're seeing a lot of beetles on the Veteran's Peak area, Dead Man Mountain area and west of Piedmont, so far seem to be some of the concentrated areas. We're finding our average outbreak is five to ten trees infected, and that's a very manageable kind of grove to treat with this cut and chunk method. *chain saw noises* Right now we just have four individuals who will be doing the cutting on a contract basis. They'll probably be getting 60 to 80 trees cut per day, and we really want to get this project done early in the season so the wood has more time to dry because it's the drying that kills those beetles. Meade County has dedicated around \$90,000.00 to this project this year. We are asking for donations. We'll begin to ramp up that effort and we're paying \$11.50 a tree to get the trees cut and chunked, but we also have a cost of the recon in getting the trees identified, and we know we're going to have costs next year and the year after if this program works and we can still do it so we are asking for donations, but what we're really doing for every tree we cut this year and chunk we're possibly saving five trees next year and 25 trees the year after that so the economics of this are very good and I guess I would remind people in Meade county that if you're out in the forest and you see some of these cut and chunked trees, they should be left where they are. You'll come across trees we're finished working on and we want them to stay there so the beetles can die there.

Rhonda O'Byrne, Northern Hills District Ranger

It's just really rewarding to see where people are really wanting to take part in helping the forest with these kind of issues and coming forward willing and able to do the things that they can and that we have been able to find a way to work together to try to deal with this mountain pine beetle